

Miscellaneous Notes

1. THE WILD PIGS IN THE ANDAMANS

(With two plates)

Some time back, Mr. A. K. Ghosh, I.C.S., Secretary, Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, informed me that there were two kinds of wild pigs in the Andamans, where he was Commissioner from 1949 to 1953.

As the CHECKLIST OF PALAEARCTIC AND INDIAN MAMMALS by Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, 1951, refers to only one species *Sus scrofa andamanensis* Blyth 1858 from the Andamans, Mr. Ghosh suggested that I write to Dr. Lidio Cipriani, an Italian anthropologist who was examining kitchen-middens in the Andamans from 1951 to 1954 and who had more direct experience of these animals.

Dr. Cipriani very kindly sent me three photographs of pigs which he had shot in the area and these present an interesting problem which requires the collection of additional specimens for its solution. The photographs were sent to Mr. J. E. Hill of the British Museum and the following tentative identifications are endorsed by him.

Photograph 1:

This was shot in the Middle Andaman and represents the common wild pig of the Great Andamans; it appears to be the domestic animal run wild. Mr. Hill was in Car Nicobar in 1947 and his recollection of pigs there is that they were of this type and roamed the island in a semi-domestic state.

Photograph 2:

This represents a short-snouted pig which Dr. Cipriani shot in the Little Andaman, where it occurred along with the long-snouted form shown in photograph 3, the two separate forms being distinguished as such by the Onges (Andaman islanders). This is probably the form described by Blyth 1858 (*Journal Asiatic Society of Bengal* 27 : 267) as *Sus andamanensis*. His description was based on ochred skulls found in native huts at Port Blair. According to Blyth, these skulls seemed akin to *S. papuensis* of New Guinea and Hodgson's Pigmy Hog of the Nepal Sāl Forest, *Porcula salvania*. From the size of the adult skull he estimated that the animal would

not exceed 15" in height at the shoulder, but later (ibid 29 : 103) he referred to a complete skeleton from which the height at the shoulder was estimated at 19 or 20". As far as one can judge, this would be near the height of the animal photographed by Dr. Cipriani. In the same journal (28 : 271), Blyth had an additional note that the tail was reduced to a mere tubercle and that the animal was well clad with somewhat shaggy black hair. Blanford (FAUNA, p. 562) stated that the one skin examined showed no distinct crest on neck or back.

Photograph 3 :

This represents a small pig about the same size as the short-snouted one (No. 2). It was found by Dr. Cipriani only in the Little Andaman. He says that the body was more slender and less heavy than that of No. 2. This was always attended by only one young.

Mr. Hill agrees that this represents a third variety occurring in the Andamans. His letter reads in part: 'The long snout, with the tusches set far back, suggests a relationship to *Sus barbatus* of Borneo, Malaya, and Sumatra, but the specimen portrayed is small for this species. However, *Sus barbatus* is distributed over many of the small islands of the Malay Archipelago, and the occurrence of a form of it on the Andaman Islands cannot be entirely discounted.'

Dr. Cipriani, to whom the above separation into three varieties was put, does not agree. In his opinion, the short-snouted pigs (Nos. 1 and 2) are of the same variety, the apparent difference in size between them being probably due to difference in age. He describes this short-snouted variety as attaining a maximum height of 55 cm., about the same as the long-snouted one, but says that it is stouter and heavier and may be as much as 80 kgm. in weight. He adds that, as in the long-snouted variety, the short-snouted females are followed by only one young, a fact which he would attribute in both cases to the inability of the mother pigs to protect more than one young one against the attacks of the Varanus Lizard (*V. salvator* ?). He states that the short-snouted variety reminded him strongly of a semi-domesticated form that he saw in south Asia and on the south-eastern slopes of the Himalayas. So also, he says, the Abors of the high Brahmaputra Valley have a pig which reminded him of the short-snouted Andamanese form. These observations suggest an explanation which may usefully be explored. In a paper, 'Excavation in Andamanese Kitchen-Middens', read by him at the 4th International Congress of Anthropological and

Ethnological Sciences at Vienna in 1952, Dr. Cipriani explained the derivation of '*Sus andamanensis*' thus: 'In the Nicobars, male pigs were invariably castrated in order to fatten them. Male and female pigs roam free in the jungle in daytime, but are called back to the house by special sounds in the evening. Females are fecundated by wild males. There can be little doubt that the wild pigs of the Nicobars are descendants from young animals which, before being castrated, did not obey to the evening calls of their owners and thus became feral. Similarly, *Sus andamanensis*, of late appearance in the kitchen-middens, would seem to be derived from a semi-domesticated breed.' Bearing these observations in mind, it seems possible that there is a gradation of intermediate forms between the local wild pig and the domestic pig, and this accounts for the difficulty which Dr. Cipriani feels in separating the short-snouted form into two varieties.

Material is required to clear up the doubts enumerated in this note and I would request sportsmen and other persons who are in a position to help to send to the Society's Offices specimens of different varieties of the wild pigs of the Andaman Islands, together with notes as to their appearance, size, weight, habits, etc.

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March 12, 1962.

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2. TRANSMISSION OF RABIES WITHOUT BITING

In October 1961 Y. S. Shivraj Kumar of Jasdan drew our attention to a report in an American journal about the transmission of rabies by bats without the victims being bitten. We thereupon made inquiries and, as the subject is important and of general interest, we publish the information so far obtained.

The new feature about the association of bats with the transmission of rabies is the probability that rabies may be transmitted without the victims being bitten. Regarding this, with the kind permission of Dr. Ernest S. Tierkel, Chief of the United States Public Health Service Rabies Programme, we reproduce below an extract from a report presented by him before the recently concluded